

PROVINCIAL PATTERN

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Province of Ross and Cromarty

ISSUE NO 106

FEBRUARY 2021

*The Quarterly Newsletter of the
Province of Ross and Cromarty*



Lodge Loch Ewe No 1551 in Aultbea

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Editorial

Welcome to the 106th edition of the “Provincial Patter”.

And so, the pandemic continues but, the good news is that most of the Lodges in the Province are keeping active in various ways as you will read in this quarter’s newsletter.

It is vital that all Lodges do whatever they can to keep each Lodge operational in some way or another whether that be through zoom meetings, working in the community or taking the opportunity to give the Lodge room a makeover so that when we do meet again, the premises will be fresh and well cared for.

There is much to look forward to in the Province – we have two Lodges still waiting to celebrate their centenaries and we will have a Provincial Installation for the new Provincial Grand Master. These, I can promise, will happen. In the case of the Rededications, a good bit later than they should have happened but there will be Deputations from Grand Lodge coming into the Province to carry out all three ceremonies.

The Province would normally be starting the annual visitation to Lodges this month. While there will be no physical visitation there will be a books inspection as normal. Provincial Grand Secretary will issue instructions in due course.

While I am aware that there have been a few serious outbreaks of Covid in the Province, I hope and trust that everyone is over the worst and now keeping safe and well.

Ramsay McGhee, Editor

Grand Lodge of Scotland



As this February edition goes to press, Grand Committee will be preparing to meet by Zoom on Thursday 4th February. At that meeting I am confident that Brother Raymond Alexander MacKeddie, Past Master of Lodge Seaforth 854 will be confirmed as the new Provincial Grand Master. His Commission will take effect from Thursday 10th June 2021.

On Saturday 23rd January, a meeting took place with all the Provincial Grand Masters – our Province was ably represented by Brother Raymond MacKeddie, Depute PGM. It was a lengthy meeting – over 3 hours – but much information was exchanged between the PGM’s and an action list is being prepared by Grand Secretary for dissemination around the Provinces. Another similar meeting will take place with the District Grand Masters followed up by one for Scottish Freemasons under 40. The outcomes from all three meetings will be fed into the Strategy Group who will collate the findings and submit a report to the Administration Committee.

Those outcomes will help to determine both the short-term strategy to get us out of the Covid pandemic and the long-term strategy to take Scottish Freemasonry forward for the foreseeable future.

Ed

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Provincial Grand Lodge:

Hi Brethren

A good new year to everyone. Who would have thought we would still be in this situation of lock down 11months later, hopefully things will get better soon with the Covid-19 injection now on the rounds. I got mine two weeks ago in Dornoch the Oxford type with NO ill effects.

Quite a few Lodges in the Province are holding regular zoom meetings and are well attended, but others are doing nothing. After 11months of lockdown I would like to encourage all the Lodges to have zoom meetings - it is the only way to keep the Brethren in touch with each other and to keep them interested in Freemasonry and invite visitors to join in.

On a cheerier note, the Grand Master Mason saw fit to award the Honorary Grand Rank of Grand Jeweller to Brother Charles Carrison. I had the pleasure to present his Diploma on the 19th December in St Duthus Lodge. Charlie Carrison is a Past Master of Lodge Averon 866 and also an Affiliate member of Lodge St Duthus as well as being the Provincial Grand Tyler. It was fortunate that the presentation took place on 19th as Charlie got a call to go back to work abroad the following week. Congratulations Charlie - well deserved!

Brother Raymond MacKeddie, DPGM, attended a zoom meeting of all Provincial Grand Masters with the Grand Master Mason, Depute Grand Master and Grand Secretary on Saturday 23rd January, and reported that some very interesting issues were discussed. Many actions have come out of the meeting for discussion and implementation at Provincial level. That being the case we will be holding an executive zoom meeting by mid-February. Notice will be given to the committee soon.

Not much else to report Brethren but keep safe and when you get that phone call to get your injection GO because nobody will be safe until we are all covered from Covid-19.

Fraternal regards

Robin Cattanach

PGM Ross and Cromarty

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Brother Charlie Carrison receiving his Honorary Grand Rank from the Provincial Grand Master

OUR YOUNG MASONS

As lockdown continues, and showing no sign of easing for a while, our Young Masons have continued to meet online, by Zoom, on a fortnightly basis, on Wednesday evenings.

The meetings are open to all Brethren who have recently joined Freemasonry, and the meetings usually include a presentation of a masonic topic by a nominated speaker, an opportunity to ask any questions, and the opportunity to have a social blether amongst themselves.

Over the past few months, they have enjoyed interesting discussions on, The Kirkwall Scroll, a presentation on the history of Lodge Old Inverness Kilwinning St. John IV by Bro. Alex Craib PM, a

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discussion on Dark Matter and Unseen Worlds by Bro Walter Benesch PM from the Maryland Masonic Research Society and couple meetings discussing the attributes of the various parts of the First Degree.

In November, they were honoured to have a presentation by Bro Ruben McSween PM, from Trinidad & Tobago, who is a well-known visitor to the Province of Ross & Cromarty. Ruben not only presented a well composed paper on the Aspects of the First Degree, but also brought around 25 eminent brethren from various Caribbean islands, who provided much wholesome masonic support and discussion, and left a positive impression on the young masons of the value and strength of Freemasonry worldwide.

In January, they were entertained to a highly informative presentation by Bros. Gavin Barrie PM and John Shirkie PM, both from Lodge St James (Kilwinning) Tarbolton 135, the mother lodge of the famous poet Robert Burns, on the masonic career of Robert Burns and his association with the lodge. The brethren also received an invitation to the Lodge St James (Kilwinning) Tarbolton Burns Supper the following Saturday evening.

As we begin a new year, the enthusiasm and commitment of the participating Brethren continues to develop an open forum, which has continued to be very entertaining and educational, and it is hoped that is filling a void in their masonic journeys until we can recommence our normal meetings.

If any lodge has any Young Masons who have not already attended these meetings, and would wish to join them, please get in touch with Raymond Mackeddie.

Raymond MacKeddie, Depute PGM

BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - FEBRUARY 1996

You just can't get the quality staff these days. In the last issue, I reported, on the strength of information received from my roving reporter, that Brother Mike Turner, Secretary of St Martin had become a grandfather. Well, it was certainly news to Mike who started asking his family some searching questions. The congratulations should have gone to Brother Mike Devine, now Master of Lodge Ness 888, and his good lady. So, on behalf of the readership, belated congratulations to Mike Devine and apologies to Mike Turner. The reporter in question has been demoted to serving tables at Burns Suppers!

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From the Provincial Almoner

Thankfully, in these troubled times, my report will be somewhat shorter than it has been of late, but sadly, once again, I have to start on a sad note and record the passing of two well-known and well-loved brethren.

On 9th December Bro. George MacIvor, Robertson's Lodge, Cromarty, passed to the Grand Lodge Above in Raigmore Hospital, Inverness. He had been a patient there for a few days prior to his passing. He had not enjoyed the best of health for some time and had been resident in Wyvis House Care Home, Dingwall, along with his wife Hilda. George had been a freemason for almost 65 years. He served his lodge with distinction and had served as both Substitute Master and Depute Master, a position he held at the time of his passing. George was also involved with Provincial Grand Lodge and held the office of Provincial Grand Tyler for a period of 15 years, and, likewise, with Provincial Grand Royal Arch Chapter where he held the office Provincial Grand Janitor for 11 years. In recognition of his services the rank of Honorary Grand Tyler was conferred on him in 1996. Due to the current restrictions re the Covid 19 pandemic George's funeral was held in private at Inverness Crematorium, however, a large number of Masonic brethren gathered outside Lodge Fingal to pay their last respects as his cortege passed.

On 22nd January Bro. Terry Rhodes, Lodge Averon, Alness passed to the Grand Lodge Above. Terry had been ill for some time. Terry had been initiated into freemasonry in England prior to moving to Scotland. At the time of his passing, he was the Chaplain of Lodge Averon. He was a regular attendee at the Lodge. Terry's funeral will be held in private at Inverness Crematorium on Thursday 4th February. Brethren will assemble outside Lodge Averon on the day of the funeral to show their respects to Terry as his cortege passes.

Both brethren will be greatly missed in their respective lodges and cards have been sent to both families conveying the condolences of the Provincial Grand Master and brethren of the Province.

Past Master Angus Ross, Lodge Ness, Invergordon is doing well and is able to get out, weather permitting, on his mobility scooter and in fact was out yesterday. I spoke to him this morning and he was in great form.

Past Master Fraser MacKay, Lodge St Duthus, Tain is still in care at Innis Mhor Care Home in Tain. His condition has not improved.

Past Master Ian MacLaren, Lodge Rosehaugh, Avoch attends Raigmore Hospital three days a week for dialysis treatment. He is coping well and every time I speak to him, he is in his usual good form.

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From the Provincial Almoner cont.

Brother Andy Farquhar, Lodge St Duthus, Tain is at home but still struggling a bit with his health since his fall.

Bro. Derek Gray, Lodge Averon, Alness is currently in Raigmore Hospital suffering from Covid 19. The latest information I have suggests that he is feeling a bit better and showing signs of improvement.

As I said in my last report in November due to the Covid 19 pandemic it has not been possible to make home or hospital visits, but I try to keep in touch by telephone etc and I have also been kept informed by Lodge Almoners. I would like, once again, to put on record my thanks to them.

Should any brother require my assistance or know of a brother who does, please contact me.

David A. MacMaster, PM

Provincial Grand Almoner

BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - FEBRUARY 2006



The Brethren of Lodge Averon really pull out the stops when it comes to their annual Senior Citizens Party. They bring in a group of internationally known musicians – today’s answer to the Band of Hope – and the Brethren even give their guests dancing demonstrations.

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New Provincial Grand Lodge Ties



I have a large supply of the new Provincial Grand Lodge ties which are taking up a fair amount of my limited storage space. And knowing how the Brethren are proud of both the Province and their own sartorial elegance, I am happy to supply ties by mail order.

The basic cost is £12 per tie plus post and packaging - a very modest £1.50 – if you send me your cheque for £13.50, (made payable to Provincial Grand Lodge General Account) to –

Roger Cundiff, Sealladh-an-loch, Lochcarron, Strathcarron, IV54 8YD – together with a note of your name and address, I will send your tie by return.

Roger Cundiff – Provincial Grand Treasurer

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FROM THE LODGES

Lodge St Duthus No 82



Lodge St Duthus No 82 have had a more active month during December than has been the norm. As we all know the current pandemic and lockdown procedures have meant that individuals and families have had to cope with stresses that have impacted on the health and well-being of many amongst us.

In order to try to alleviate this impact, Lodge St Duthus this year decided to give a gift at Christmas to all of its members and their partners. We also included widows of members that have passed away. This was to remind all, that although we were all isolating the members of the Lodge were thinking of them. The Lodge decided to purchase well-being gifts from a local business '*Made in Tain*' which is a Social Enterprise company that helps teenagers and young adults who have support needs and assists these young people into employment.

Made in Tain have struggled greatly as a result of COVID19 and have had to stop young people from coming into their premises due to the social distancing rules. We decided to support *Made in Tain* and in turn the young people by purchasing over 50 gift packs which included soap, smellies, shortbread and chocolates all made and packaged by the young people. These gifts and a card were then all distributed by the brethren the weekend before Christmas.

Whilst Brethren met in the Lodge to collect the gifts the opportunity was taken to present a gift of a lamp from Tain Pottery to our retiring Treasurer PM Dan Patience. Bro Dan has served the Lodge as treasurer for nearly 20 years and we were delighted to be able to present him with this gift as a small token of our appreciation. The lamp was presented by the RWM John Mackenzie and Bro Dan was also congratulated by PGM Robin Cattanach who was also in attendance.

Bro Charlie Carrison was also presented with a certificate from Grand Lodge on the occasion of him being awarded Honorary Grand Lodge Rank. This was presented to Bro Charlie by PGM Robin Cattanach.

Bro D Macrae - Secretary

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Lodge St Duthus No 82 cont.

Since lockdown began in March members have been involved in volunteering throughout the community. The Development Trust in Tain asked for volunteers for their Street Ambassador scheme to check on neighbours on a daily basis and Brethren helped with this scheme as well as being involved in delivering meals to the elderly and those shielding. One brother held regular online radio broadcasts for the whole community helping to raise everybody's spirit.



PM David MacRae, Secretary of Lodge St Duthus, collecting the Christmas Gift Bags from "Made in Tain" for distribution to Lodge members and widows at Christmas.

Wishing you all a Happy New Year from all at Lodge St Duthus No 82

Stay safe and Stay healthy.

Bro D Macrae - Secretary

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Lodge Fortrose No 108

Yet another quarter gone by and now we in the Western Isles have been put into tier 4 because of a Covid outbreak coming from the local hospital. The heads of the orders in Scotland are not expecting us to be able to meet again before the late autumn. We can only hope that the vaccination programme will be successful in allowing us all to get back to some kind of normality before then.

Thank goodness for the technology that allows us to meet virtually and speak with each other, indeed it has giving our brethren from all over the globe that opportunity. Because of these zoom meetings we are being kept pretty much up to date with all that is happening not just in the province but outwith.

Some detail from the zoom meetings:

November 6 - RWM Macinnes welcomed Bro Stuart Jack, Lodge St Bryde 579. Bro Jack delivered a lecture in relation to members of Lodge St Bryde who had served in the World Wars and other conflicts and in relation to Commonwealth War Graves most of which he is in the process of visiting.

November 20 -PGS Mike Turner gave a lecture regarding the Boston Tea Party. And the part that Members of Lodge St Andrew, Boston, may have played in these events.

December - Bro Mike Phillips, who was joining from Virginia, gave a lecture in relation to the Grand Lodge of Virginia and a history of Freemasonry in Virginia.

January 1 - PGM Donald Mackenzie, British Colombia and Yukon introduced several Brethren from the Province who were attending the meeting and extended fraternal greetings and a happy new year. Bro Charles Buchanan gave a short history of freemasonry in British Columbia.

Also, on 1st January a wreath was laid by the Lodge at the Iolaire memorial in remembrance of the brethren who lost their lives and in remembrance of close relations of current lodge members.

The photo on the next page shows our Master, Brother Henry MacInnes and Past Master Derek Mackay at the Iolaire memorial. The Iolaire disaster is one of the most tragic events in the history of the Western Isles. Two months after the end of the First World War, 205 men died, 174 Lewis men and 7 Harris men, sailors who had survived the war - and were only yards from the shore, where families were watching to welcome them home.

The photo on page 12 depicts the Lodge's annual benevolence distribution amounted to £3000, some of which was given to needy members in the form of a hamper.

Donnie Macleod

Donald Macleod PM

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BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - FEBRUARY 2005

December also saw the final Lodge Fortrose Quiz & Curry Night of the year, the proceeds from which are put towards the annual visit to the islands of the children from Chernobyl. The Lodge has been associated with these visits for some 5 years now and it is not only a pleasure but also a privilege to be involved. In fact, on December 30 and 31 we saw a practical example of the worth of the project when the Lodge played host to a family from the area.

The start to the New Year has been horrendous with one of the worst storms in living memory. Fortunately, the Lodge itself escaped with only minor structural damage, but the impact of any material loss pales into insignificance when set against the terrible human tragedy of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster and our own terrible tragedy in South Uist. When faced with the terrible force of nature, our human efforts seem puny indeed. We have been informed that the “Aquaboxes” which we purchase from Rotary International and fill with supplies were actually delivered to Sri Lanka. We know this as a unique reference number can trace each box.

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Brethren of Lodge Fortrose distributing food hampers

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Robertson's Lodge No 134

Sincere Greetings Brethren,

A Guid New Year to all, the Brethren of Robertson's Lodge No. 134 are most certainly, like the rest of the World, hoping that this year will be a better one. We can but hope and put our trust in our Higher Being, wherever we are.

Like all Freemasons, Members of the Lodge are greatly missing the regular meetings that we used to hold. But the Lodge continues to have regular Zoom Virtual Meetings, technology permitting, so as to keep in touch.

Not all members choose, or are able, to take part but we also communicate by WhatsApp Group Chat and of course Telephone. Brother Morris Downie has shown himself to be a dab hand at passing on lots of both serious and cheery texts on our WhatsApp group, with others responding. For those that make use of Facebook, there are now lots of Masonic Groups and Pages that have grown and multiplied leaving much for those that indulge to follow. Yes, it can be rather time involving and consuming, leading us to while away time rather surprisingly.

Our Lodge Members also login to other Lodge's Zoom Meetings, passing on their friendship and greetings, Brother Andrew MacIvor, always seem to pop up as well as others. We are most grateful for the invitations given to us by these Lodges, to their meetings as well as quizzes. Brother Alasdair Morrison calls into the Lodge Seaforth Young Mason's Group. The next Robertson's Lodge Zoom Meeting is planned for the normal meeting date on the month, that is Wednesday 17th February 2021.

We are of course grateful for the weekly Coronavirus Update Letter and ZOOM appearances from our Grand Master Mason, Bro. Ramsay McGhee, a Lodge Member, keeping us all up to date with Grand Lodge info and advice on various matters.

In the meantime, the Lodge premises are briefly visited regularly even though they are not being used at this time. At all times the Lodge Almoner, Brother Jim Tait, continues dutifully with his responsibilities and keeping in touch fraternally with those who are in Homes or have had illnesses.

Fraternal Best Wishes to All, please stay safe and well.

Peter K. Ratcliffe.

Lodge Secretary.

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BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - FEBRUARY 2005

I recently had an enquiry from a PM Thomas Perkins of the English Constitution asking if I could give him any information regarding his grandfather also Thomas Perkins who had been a Serviceman in the Ross-shire Area and had been initiated into Robertson's Lodge in 1917 (anyone remember him?). With SW Ronald Young we went through our archives and found all the information and relative dates regarding the man who had been in C.Q.M.S. Seaforth's stationed at Newton Camp Cromarty. I was able to pass on the relevant information to his grandson who was delighted.



Lodge Fingal No 318

During the Zoom meetings we had for November, December, and January, we were treated to fine Lectures by Brothers Ramsay McGhee and Rev. Ivan Warwick.

November 10th

This was our AGM and Nomination of Office Bearers. Due to the current pandemic, it was agreed that the Office-bearers for Season 2020 - 2021 remain the same as 2019 - 2020, apart from the sad loss of our WJW, Bro Colin John Isaac MacPhee, who passed to the Grand Lodge above on the 18th October. After the Business was completed, we went on with the remaining agenda for the evening.

Unfortunately, Brother Jim Murray SM of Lodge Fingal was unable to give his talk on Poppy Scotland, due to visiting a close friend suffering from throat cancer. However, Honorary Member, Brother Ramsay McGhee, GMM, stepped in and gave us a talk on Poppy Scotland during which he covered many aspects of the organisation which many of the Brethren were unaware of. The Master, Brother Donnie Gunn thanked Ramsay for his talk, which lasted some fifteen minutes and congratulated him on his receiving the Poppy Scotland President's Award.

December 8th

The talk on 8th December was given by Past Master, Bro. Rev. Ivan Warwick who took as his theme - Christmas. Ivan's talk, lasted some twenty minutes. He touched on the subject of, different religions over world, having their own traditions of a festival of light in the darkest season. Since the 10th Century BC, to this present time we find ourselves enjoying many different celebrations. The song that sums it all up, Fred Coote wrote in 1934 which became a classic - "Santa Claus is coming to town". The Master thanked Ivan for his presentation - a lot of study had gone into the presentation.

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January 12th}

The Talk this evening was once again given by Honorary Member Bro Ramsay McGhee GMM, who gave a presentation on Bro Robert Burns the Mason. He thanked the Master for the opportunity and spoke about Robert Burns, the Freemason, quoting from several of his works in the process. The Master thanked Ramsay for his talk, which lasted some twenty minutes.

The Brethren of Lodge Fingal would like to thank both Speakers for the preparation they put into their Lectures.

As this being January, the season for Robbie Burns. Burns Night, the Strathpeffer Club which would have been held on Friday 22nd. Here is a poem from Bro. Henry Cameron.

Eftir the Haggis

Oh what a sleeket horrible beastie
Lurks in yer bellie efter the feastie
As ye sit doon 'mongst aw yer kin
There starts tae stir an enormous win'
The neeps an the tatties an mushy peas.
Start workin like a gentle breeze
But soon the puddin wi' sonsie face
Will hae ye blawin a'ower the place
Nae maiter whit the hell ye dae
A'body's gonnie have tae pay

It's like a bullet oot o' a rifle
Hawd yer bum tight tae the chair
Tae try and stop the leakin air
Shift yersel frae cheek tae cheek
Pray tae God it disnae reek
But aw yer efforts gan asunder
Oot it comes like a clap o' thunder
Ricochets aroon' the room
Michty me a sonic boom
God Almighty ,it fairly reeks
Hope I huvnae shit ma breeks !!

Cannae help but raise a smile
'Wis him' I shout with accusing glower
Alas too late h'es just keeled ower
'Ye dirty bugger!' they shout and stare
Tae the bog I'd better scurry,

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Whit the hell it's no ma worry.
A'body roon about me chokin'
Yin or twa were nearly bokin
I'll feel better for a while
A dinae feel welcome ony mair
Where e're ye be let wind gang free
Sounds just like the job for me
Whit a fuss at Rabbies party
Ower the sake o' one wee farty.

Many thanks for the Poem, Henry.

At this juncture would like to mention to Fingal Brethren, those awful two words Test Fees are now due, for the amount off £55. Now in turn we must pay Grand Lodge £33, for them to survive, with all their overheads. By paying Grand Lodge, we receive a certificate, enabling us to make Freemasons and Affiliate Members. To get this certificate for Season 2021, Grand Lodge charged us for 42 members, so you can see that FEES have to be paid for Fingal to survive. Our Treasurer Bro. Henry Cameron will accept payments by cheque or by Bacs, here are the details: Henry Cameron, 7 Kinettas Square, Strathpeffer, Ross-shire, IV14 9BD. Or direct to Bank of Scotland, sort code. 80-06-35 a/c 00301643.

Would also like to mention that the 50 / 50 Club comes to an end this February. Now then, Bro. Henry has agreed to carry on for another Year, the cost still being the same £60. The Club has been running since 2004, this helps tremendously with the running of the Lodge, otherwise we would be in dire consequence. Bank details remain the same as was previously mentioned.

As we go through these strange times. Take care and stay safe.

That`s all Folks, watch this Space.

D. Gunn R.W.M

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LODGE ALLAN WILSON 851

The members of Lodge Allan Wilson 851 enjoyed a Zoom meeting just to keep everyone in touch and to officially declare our support for Raymond MacKeddie as the new Provincial Grand Master. It was good to see everyone again and there is still a glimmer of hope that we will be able to meet this year – it is not clear whether we will manage all three meetings or not but at least one meeting to install Brother Ian Russell as our new Master for the ensuing year would be good.

Brother Russell has speakers all lined up for the meetings so hopefully there will be an opportunity to hear them.

Editor

LODGE SEAFORTH 854

Meetings

As lockdown continues and looks like it is going to for a while yet, the Master, Bro Graham Law continues to host an online Zoom Meeting, held on the first and third Mondays of each month. The meetings continue to be well attended, and allow the Lodge to conduct some administration, discuss maintenance of the lodge building and generally socialise with brethren and visitors.

Carol Service

The Lodge members held their Annual Carol & Readings Service, with a different experience this year, as it was held online. The Christmas readings from the Bible were delivered by the Office-bearers of the Lodge, and the meeting participants had the opportunity to sing along to the hymns from home, accompanied by the music provided by Bro. Ramsay McGhee.

Quiz Night

The Lodge has continued to host an online quiz on the third Friday night of each month. These quizzes have been run by our esteemed quizmaster, Bro. James Fraser, SD, and are open to friends and families. Many thanks to the regular contingent of quizzers, from all parts of the country, who are providing an exciting and challenging event each month.

Building Maintenance

The kitchen has been spruced up, with a new ceiling material applied to make it comply with environmental health standards, and the walls have been tiled and painted.

Raymond MacKeddie PM - Secretary

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BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - FEBRUARY 2005

We met and we married, a long time ago;
We worked for long hours; the wages were low.
No telly, no radio, no bath, times were hard.
Just a cold tap and toilet – away up the yard.

No going abroad, no carpets on the floors,
But we'd coal on the fire and we ne'er locked the doors;
Our children arrived, no pill in those days,
We brought them all up, without any State aid.

No Valium, no drugs and no LSD,
We cured our own pains with a nice cup of tea.
And when we were sick we were treated at once,
No filling in forms and "come back in a month."

No vandals, no mugging, for there was nowt to rob;
In fact you were rich with a couple of bob.
People were happier in those far off days,
Kinder, more caring in so many ways!

Milkmen and paper lads, they'd whistle and sing,
And a night at the pictures was a wonderful thing.
Aye, we had our share of trouble and strife,
But we just had to face it – because that was life!

Now I'm alone, looking back through the years,
I don't think of the bad times, the trouble and tears;
I remember the blessings, our home our love;
We shared them together and I thank God above.

My thanks to PM Robert Scott, Lodge Fingal who submitted the above poem back in 2005.

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LODGE AVERON 866

Brethren I hope you are all well and keeping safe. This pandemic now seems very real indeed and is touching too close to home for many of us. Please stay safe.

Lodge Averon 866 has had some sad news recently in the passing to the Grand lodge above of Bro Terry Rhodes. Bro Terry was an affiliate member of our lodge from the English Province of Somerset, where I understand he was held in high esteem in several orders and within his Province and beyond. He held the office of Chaplin in Lodge Averon and was a quiet and dignified gentleman who was well liked and respected within our Lodge. He will be sadly missed.

The Lodge in general has tried to keep busy during these trouble times we find ourselves by carrying out in house maintenance which is just about complete. The Lodge is now looking very fresh and tidy inside and out. Unfortunately, we have had to cancel our annual old folks party this coming February. However, we have distributed Christmas Cards to all of them with a contact number for the lodge should any require any assistance during this current lockdown.

We also had to cancel our Children's Christmas party. Instead, we delivered a present to every youngster on our list in a Santa trailer which toured around the town. So, the youngsters did not miss out. This went down a storm with them and they gathered along the route with Santa and his elves handing out sweets to all. A great deal of gratitude must go to Bro Gary Miller and PM Bro Frazer MacBeath for taking ownership and taking the lead for both these events. A thanks must also go to all the Elves involved and Bro Gavin Sutherland for the use of his pickup and trailer.

Some pictures of our Santa Trailer and Santa and his Elves. We done all involved.



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We are all endeavouring to keep in touch via multimedia and Zoom business meeting with plans to organise some online quizzes over the next week and months or even just a chat and a beer. We are already planning how we might utilise our new carpark for fund raising or fun in the Summer months. Something to look forward to. To plan for and hope for.

Donald J Mathieson – Master, Lodge Averon No 866

BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - FEBRUARY 2008

I am delighted to confirm that the Grand Master Mason, Bro Sir Archibald Donald Orr Ewing and Grand Secretary, Bro David MacKay Begg will both be in the Province later this month. They will accompany me on the annual visit to Lodge Fortrose No 108 on the 16th May and on the 17th May will visit Lodge St Martin for morning coffee and Lodge Fingal for a buffet lunch. On all three occasions the Grand Master will be delighted to meet local Brethren.

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LODGE NESS No 888

BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - FEBRUARY 2005

“The “Bell” which has been mounted proudly on the wall to the left of the Junior Warden’s chair, was erected as a lasting memorial to the late Bro George Dickson. It was placed in this position as the chair to the left of the JW was George’s favourite seat in the Lodge. Bro George was a first engineer on tankers and cargo boats during the Second World War. His voyages were generally from the UK to America and Canada. On two of these trips, George’s ship was torpedoed. On the first occasion, they were not far from the English coast and managed to limp back to Liverpool. On the second occasion however, when near to Nova Scotia, a torpedo sank their ship. George grabbed his beloved melodeon and clambered down a ladder into a lifeboat but, unfortunately, in the process lost his grip on the melodeon and it disappeared in the murky depths never to be seen again. After the war, George continued his career in the Merchant Navy. At one point, he secured the position of first engineer on board a ship that was crewed primarily by Germans and George never let them forget that it was due to their activities that he lost his beloved melodeon.

The Bell, as far as I know, must have come from one of the early ships that George sailed on as he had it in his possession for many years. George’s daughter presented the Bell to the Lodge so that it could hang in his memory. I very often visited George in his house where the Bell hung from the ceiling in his living room. Many a time when we were having a dram, he would ring the Bell and say – Robert, that’s a twelve bells dram.”

From Lodge Ness 888 – February 2005

BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - FEBRUARY 2008

The February meeting of Grand Lodge commenced with an In Memoriam Service in respect of five eminent Brethren who have recently passed to the Grand Lodge above. Two of the Brethren were well known and well respected in this Province – Bro Eric Coles, PGM of Argyll and the Isles and John Alexander Budge, Past PGM of Caithness. The other three were William McKillop, Past Substitute Grand Master, Alex Murray, Past PGM of Renfrewshire East and Abraham B Jacobs, Past DGM of the Eastern Province of the Cape of Good Hope.

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LODGE KYLE No 1117

A WINTER OF DISCONTENT

Christmas came and went as did the New Year without any issue up at the 100+ years old Lodge in Kyle of Lochalsh. At least 4 of the Brethren regularly check and clean, making sure that the repairs to the roof are holding fast and the pipes are not frozen. The rest of the Brethren are keeping well with PM Rob (and staff) running the Post Office and shop flawlessly throughout the “pandemic”, and other Brethren toiling away from home or out on the road supplying essential services. Kyle is a small community, and we keep our ears open for any information that would suggest locals are suffering hardship, but as yet everyone seems to be “coping” with the isolation as well as the lack of money and daily purpose.

My own feeling is that as the virus loosens its grip on Scotland, and the rest of the world, financial resources from the government will lessen and this is where we as Freemasons need to be especially vigilant for those in dire straits.

That said, Lodge Kyle has resources in the bank should we be required to reach out and help quickly. I should also mention that the young folk in the area are still volunteering, even after nearly a year, to bring goods to those unable to get to the shops, and that there is a community food bank at the Church in Kyle which is utilised. (As well as others dotted around rural communities).

January also saw a telephone call from a representative of a small government body, wishing to hire the Lodge Hall for the day, on a regular basis. Everything seemed mutually agreeable until the fellow “just wanted to confirm” that our Wi-Fi was of reasonable quality. I had to tell him we had no Broadband into the Masonic Hall and with that... the conversation ended. As secretary I can’t think of reasons why as Freemasons who meet less than a dozen times a year, we actually NEED Broadband in the Hall, especially as we don’t currently have a phone there. However, there are good broadband deals from 20 pounds per month; but this is a heavy annual expense for a small rural Lodge; so why even mention it? The reality is we DON’T need broadband at present however opportunities begin to open up if we do have broadband in the Hall. Hall hire becomes more appealing, especially during the day for small groups, creating a break-even point at only one reasonable group hire per month. Seminars using laptops and tablet computers become a possibility and of course situations we have not considered that will inevitably appear once people know that the facilities are. There is also the hidden marketing potential of having a community regularly using the Masonic Hall and being more open about access. Something to think about, especially as Lodge is 2 metres from BT’s Exchange Broadband Connections.

The /

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The pandemic has also catalysed innovation and creativity. Who would have foreseen the sudden rise in the use of Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and other networking software by the general citizenry. Or predicted a massive rise in bicycle use and working from home? A fall in crime, a fall in flu, a fall in pollution. A rise in hygiene, a rise in affordable education, a rise in outdoor exercise and a rise in appreciation for simple things we once took for granted.

This winter, which arguably will be one of the harshest for many souls within living memory, will almost certainly see an easing of the pandemic, and hopefully we will all emerge into this summer's sun, stronger and positively prepared for almost anything that lies ahead.

Ronnie Miller, PM
Secretary

BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - FEBRUARY 2005

We are all aware of the Masonic significance of the acacia plant however, the late PM Bob MacLean, Lodge Seaforth, came up with some other interesting information about the acacia plant back in 2005:

There are about 800 varieties including the wattle, mimosa, long folia and pravissima, commonly known as Ovens wattle. In India, it is placed in the turban to ward off evil. The wood is burnt in incense along with sandalwood to enhance psychic powers. In Mediterranean countries it represents life, immortality, platonic love and retirement and, having both red and white flowers, it denotes death and life and death and rebirth. The crown of thorns was said to have been made of acacia. To the Egyptians it symbolises the sun, rebirth, immortality and innocence. To the Hebrews it was the Shittah tree, the sacred wood of the tabernacle and symbolised immortality, a moral life, innocence but also funerals and mourning.



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LODGE ROSEHAUGH No 1216

I was out enjoying a game of golf early in November and had not shaved for a few days. One of my partners remarked if I had enrolled for the “Movember” challenge. I indicated I had not but on completion of game and enjoying a refreshment £15 was put in my direction. I mentioned that Mike Turner from Ullapool had a fund raiser on the go for prostate cancer. A bit of coaxing with the office bearers and a Lodge Donation got us to the £210 mark and although missing out on the Glenmorangie very pleased with the effort and even more pleased to shave it off!

The Rosehaugh annual ‘old folks’ Christmas party was sadly cancelled this year, due to the Coronavirus restrictions. The Brethren of Lodge Rosehaugh were able to give some Christmas cheer to the usual participants by handing out goodie bags. PM Allan Carmichael and PM Scott Patience put together goodie bags containing tea, coffee, biscuits and chocolates for the elderly. Then handed them out door to door. These were very well received by all, especially at this time where visitations are limited, and individuals are lonely. The Lodge Christmas parties and goodie bags are also funded by the local businesses so thanks to all who contributed. Hope we will see the party back in full force in 2021.

Despite the postponement of our Centenary celebrations, we have a number of memorabilia items available. We have had a lot of interest out-with the Province especially for the mark pennies and we did have to place a re-order for these. However now fully stocked again so please get in touch if you are interested in any of these.

The full listing we have is:

100th Anniversary Jewel priced at £20.00.

Enamel mark penny priced at £10.00.

Bronze mark penny priced at £5.00.

Key rings priced at £10.00 in stock.

100th anniversary glass priced at £10.00.

100th anniversary ties priced at £15.00.

Please email me if you are interested in any of the above to axer69@btinternet.com

Monthly draw results.

October	November	December	January	
Allan Carmichael	Darren Patience	Lewie Patience	Les Warne	£85
Hamish Munro	Donald McLennan	Will Traill	William Macleman	£50
Graham Law	Ali Macdonald	Gordon Killbourn	Lesley Patience	£25

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Brother Keith "Movember" Patience.

Keith Patience, PM, Secretary

In the November issue Brother Keith Patience asked if anyone recognised the following poem found in his late uncles Bible. Well, Brother Murdo MacPhail has come to the rescue pointing out that the words are from Paraphrase 1 – 7 based on the words found in Ecclesiastes Chapter 9, verses 4 – 6 and 10.

Life is the season God hath given /

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Life is the season God hath given,
To fly from Hell, and rise to Heaven;
That day of grace fleets fast away
And none its rapid course can stay.

The living know that they must die
But all the dead forgotten lie;
Thus memory and their name is gone
Alike unknowing and unknown.

Their hatred and their love is lost
Their envy buried in the dust;
They have no share in all that's done
Beneath the circuit of the sun.

Then what thy thoughts design to do
Still let thy hands with might pursue;
Since no device or work is found
Nor wisdom underneath the ground.

In the cold grave, to which we haste
There are no acts of pardon past;
But fix'd the doom of all remains
And everlasting silence reigns.

Many thanks Brother MacPhail for enlightening us all.

BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - FEBRUARY 1997

How often do we hear that visiting is the lifeblood of Lodges. Lodge Seaforth is rightly proud of two of their members who, in the past few months, have been to Cromarty, Avoch, Alness and Forres. Maybe nothing out of the ordinary there, you might think. But it is not a bad record for Brothers Harry Rodger and Maxwell McGhee whose combined age is an amazing 172. Surely there is a lesson to be learned by many of the younger and fitter Brethren in all our Lodges.

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Lodge St Martin 1217

Well brethren, another edition of “The Patter” and the pandemic seems to get no better.

The lodge is continuing with their “regular” Zoom meetings and it is a great idea to make sure all the members are keeping well in these strange times.

St Martin has been busy during the last few months, helping both financially and otherwise within the village. At the end of November, the members were installing the Christmas lighting in the trees down Market Street. Then on the 16th December the Santa Float toured the village so that the children could see that Santa was still able to visit, because of the social distancing it was decided that there would not be a door to door collection as normal, however almost £300 was collected from passing donors on the night.

The lodge also received the good news from Tesco “Bags of Help” Scheme that we were successful with our application for funding to upgrade our Santa Float equipment to the value of £1000. Thinking caps are now being switched on to see if we can design a float that is easy to erect and dismantle efficiently and build it so that it will last for many years.

The lodge assisted the local “Parish Hub” financially with a donation of £1000 to help local families who were in need over the Christmas period due to the pandemic. Pictured is the RWM Bro. Phil Ellis presenting a cheque for £1000 to the Rev. Heidi Harcus, Church of Scotland Minister. (Bro. Andrew Ferrier looking on).



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Lodge St Martin 1217 cont.

The lodge also donated £500 to Lochbroom House, NHS Care Home for their “Light Up Lochbroom House” project which enabled them to decorate the exterior of the home and also the resident rooms with festive lights and decorations. Pictured are RWM Phil Ellis presenting a cheque for £500 to Ms Anne Napier, Manager of Lochbroom House.



The lodge also donated £1000 to the Lochbroom Community Council Vyner Place Play Park project. Pictured is RWM Bro. Phil Ellis presenting the cheque for £1000 to Mr Topher Dawson, Chairman of the Community Council.



The lodge also has some of our centenary coins in both bronze and enamel at £6 and £7 respectively. Hope you all keep safe and well.

Charles MacAulay, PM
Secretary

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Lodge Loch Ewe 1551

While the Lodge cannot meet, work is being carried out by the Brethren. The Bar area has now been removed and it has been replaced with a small storage area. The Bar will be relocated into the cupboard next to the toilet.

The tender has been accepted for the new roof on the extension; weather permitting this will start soon. Work on the toilet refurbishment including new flooring will follow.

It is very much appreciated by all the Lodge members that when we return to normal meetings, it is the intention of at least 3 members of Lodge St Martin's 1217 to affiliate to the Lodge. This will be a great boost to the lodge - thank you one and all.

As per Grand Lodge instructions the Lodge is being checked on a regular basis by our resident Brother Peter Davidson. So far all is well.

Kind Regards

Ally Gault

Master – Lodge Loch Ewe

BLAST FROM THE PAST - FROM - MAY 2008

On Thursday April 10th, Lodge Loch Ewe was host to the Annual Visitation by the Provincial Grand Lodge. For the visit the Lodge performed a Mark Degree ceremony. Bro Aonghas MacIver had the degree bestowed on him. This was a very proud evening for PM John Angus MacIver seeing his son receive the Degree, and himself playing a major part in the ceremony. Added to this, was a very well timed visit by our former organist, Bro Robert Hanna, who weaved his magic at the Lodge organ, giving a musical lift to the proceedings. The PGM complimented RWM Colin Forbes for the masterly performance by himself and his team throughout the Degree ceremony. Bro Aonghas MacIver is the third generation of his family in the Lodge. The Lodge also presented a cheque for £100 to the PGM as a contribution for his Malawi trip.

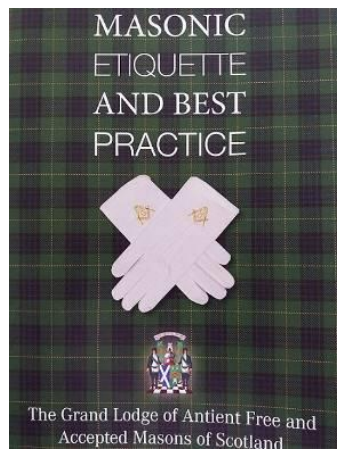
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BITS AND PIECES



This new booklet from the Grand Lodge of Scotland will be helpful to all but especially to those making their way up through the offices towards the chair of their Lodge. The new publication is available from Grand Lodge and priced at a very reasonable £3.00 per copy, £1.00 of which is going to Masonic Charities. The booklet is the work of the Information and Communications Committee and is a very easy guide to Masonic Etiquette and Best Practice.

It covers the A to Z of decorum within the Lodges from the correct positioning of the Altar to correct forms of Address, to Visiting. The booklet also contains guidelines for the use of Masonic Websites, Email and Social Media. One copy is currently being sent to each Master, free of charge and thereafter, the booklet will be available to all to purchase.

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HEILAN SHED No 6

PROVINCIAL GRAND ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER of R&C

Tain & Ross RAC 63

The Companions have held two joint Zoom meetings with Lodge St Duthus, both of which have been successful and have allowed everyone to catch up. There is a quiet confidence that by October we will be able to meet and see ME Companion David MacRae installed.

St Clement RAC 244

Cromarty Firth RAC 310

ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER HEBRIDES NO. 364.

ME First Principal Alan McPhee is hoping it will not be too long until all the companions can meet again. Hopefully, the current vaccination programme will help. He would like to pass on his regards to all the companions.

Donnie Macleod

Donald Macleod IPGS R&C

PRECEPTORY OF THE WESTERN ISLES

Venerable Preceptor James Smith is passing on his best wishes to all the fraters and is looking forward to when we can all meet again.

Donnie Macleod

†‡ Donald Macleod KCT